Rainy Day Vaudeville.

Old Friends on the Stage: Comedy in the Audience

There is probably no city of great size in the world which offers so few attractions for a summer rainy day as New York. If it rains, where can you go to have a good time, and what can you do? There is a minimum of choice.

It is here that the vaudeville, scoffed at by some people at other times, reaps the benefit of its continuousness. A rainy afternoon at vaudeville in summer is as well patronized as a county fair on a pleasant day, and its patronage is as varied, ranging from the ecclesiastic who relaxes after a strenuous day to Jake and Maggie on their bridal tour Maggie chewing a

THE USHER SLIDES DOWN THE AISLE.

nickel-in-the-slot treat and Jake comparing her favorably with the blue and pink ladies on the stage.

It is the same old vaudeville. Men may come and men may go, but the vaudeville changeth not. For 50 cents one may get an aisle seat in the middle of the house and request one's neighbor in the seat before to remove her hat with as much hauteur as if one paid $2 for the place.

GETTING HIS MONEY'S WORTH.

But the differenec between the 50-cent and the $2 seat seems to be that the critical spirit is incased in the odd dollar and a half, for the vaudeville audience, whatever else it may be, is not critical. When the chaser comes on, the audience talks, goes out, sleeps or is quiet, but no refractory spirit is manifested; there is no I-want-my-money's-worth cavilling. The vaudeville audience takes what is given it, and if not thankful, at least is not unthankful, and there is a mighty difference.

By 2 o'clock the house is full. The first attraction comes on promptly.

She is always gowned in a spangled dress. The Greeks had three words in their language to express the word white. They didn't have vaudeville in those days, or they would have had a fourth word which would mean vaudeville white. It is vaudeville white that the lady wears.

She is the mother-and-home girl. She is also a woman of strong likes and dislikes. One of her most rampant dislikes is to the key, which never by any accident does she approach. She begins by singing "I'm wooring away my hort for you."

While she is wooring away her hort a series of colored pictures is thrown on the white curtain at her side. They are supposed to represent the soul-racking experiences of the song.

Bright greens, yellows, reds, purples mingle in a riot of luxury in the pictures. She meets him in a bright pink gown, in a spinach-green dale, overhung with arcades of lip-salve roses and gurgled by cobalt blue ripples of running water.

He wears conventional checks enlivened by a golden tie.

They are clasping hands and there is misery implanted on both their faces, which are turned in the picture-on-the postal-card style, full face toward the audience. The lady complains while the picture slowly dissolves, "I'm wooring away my hort for you."

Having impressed the fact upon the audience she emphasizes it by wooring away in a blue dress, sitting on the top

THE RABBIT HUNT.

step of a suburban villa named Wildwood with a rubber plant growing at one side and her head drooping on her knees. Her hat is of a style of three years ago. A full-blown moon slowly rises over the scene, and, in some unaccountable way, you feel that the cup of bitterness of the spangled lady is fuller than by rights it ought to be.

All the audience apparently feels that way. There is cheerless patter of rain outside. The room has been darkened for the occasion and the demand for more hort is insistent.

This time the hort woors away in a woodland glen with a rustic bridge on the side. The bridge is the shade of a good cigar, the grass looks like *haricots verts* and the moon, like a huge Camembert cheese, rises majestically in the middle foreground. The lady is in scarlet with jet trimmings, and her woe is jet black, too, without scarlet enlivenment.

Then, intoxicated by success, the lady in the spangles woors away her hort in green in a ballroom; in purple, in a hammock; in black, with a big white dog as her only companion; in a pink punt lashed to a stake amid crimson cat tails. Her hort finally woors away for good and all in a tropical jungle with the continuous moon amid lariats of jessamine and century plants.

She fades away while the orchestra softly plays "Believe me, if all those endearing young charms." She is recalled to sing "Home, Sweet Home."

The dissolving views for this song look like the pictorial illustrations for a real estate agency in the suburbs. They have retained the color scheme and have added an infinite variety. There are homes in the Far West and the Near East; in the sunny South and the ice-bound North; palaces of princes and cabins of lonely hunters on the banks of the Wo-Wo; the single room in an Esquimau hut and the suites of apartments in a Fifth avenue mansion. There are garden spots and untilled fields, all suggesting unlimited pigment and a generous spirit on the part of the artist.

The songster varies her accent, too. She says now: "There's naw plice like whoom."

While she is announcing this fact over and over, a family of commuters from Jersey come in. There are the father and mother, the baby daughters and five steps, masculine and feminine.

You know that they did not start for the vaudeville. They probably intended to visit grandmother, who lives in Flatbush, but the rain has driven them in. The man murmurs, forgetfully, as he follows the procession down the aisle, the ballade of the Jerseyite. "Be it ever so humble, it's better than home."

He is followed by the man who lives in a Harlem flat on the line of the subway, who

THE POODLE IN PETTICOATS.

has brought his magazine and sits down in an end seat, loses himself forthwith in the intricacies of a scientific article, secure in the knowledge that at last he has found a place where he can read undisturbed.

While the boy in uniform comes on and changes the number for the next performance the spectators take stock of one another and move restlessly back and forth; the usher, who has found one distraction in the monotony of his life, slides down the tip-tilted floor while he shows other late arrivals to their seats.

The toboggan sliding boy is not the least of the vaudeville attractions, although he is not advertised. The floor is at just the right angle and the covering has been worn smooth by successive feet and forms a slide not to be despised. The boy with the water glasses also slides and adds his little meed of excitement to the afternoon's enjoyment.

The second number is, of course, the man with the performing dog.

There is something about good, plain dog which appeals to every upright soul. The desire for dog is latent in the human heart, just as is the desire for the truth and the other Sunday school virtues. Shakespeare might have said with equal force "Show me the man that hath not dog in his soul" instead of what he did say. But by what convolution of the brain cells any one can find aught of interest in a puppy dressed in borrowed plumes and put through a lot of uninteresting antics, is yet to be explained.

A line of men in the centre of the house have about them the air of the forbidden. "I am busy at the office" is written all over their smile-wreathed faces. One can imagine the usual scene:

Mrs. Smith at the telephone—I want Mr. Smith.

Office Boy—Sorry, ma'am; but Mr. Smith is so busy to-day he can't be disturbed; there 'ave five men been 'ere the las' half hour and I trun 'em all down.

Mrs. Smith—But I must speak to him.

Office Boy, firmly—It's as much as my place is worth, ma'am, I can't do it.

Mrs. Smith—It's a pity if I can't speak to my own husband.

Office Boy—Sorry, ma'am. Are you through?

It is later in the day that Mr. Smith ducks suddenly.

"Lean forward a little," he murmurs strenuously to Brown on the right, who, being a widower, chuckles exasperatingly at the situation. "For Heaven's sake be quick; she'll see me."

Brown obeys, and Mrs. Smith sails by to a front seat.

It is over the dinner table that Smith, a

THE MOTHER-AND-HOME GIRL.

little tired with the afternoon's wear and tear of unused muscle, says, irrelevantly:

"Worked like a dog to-day."

He didn't say vaudeville dog, but he undoubtedly had it in his mind.

"You don't know what it is to work," says Mrs Smith, with conviction. "You ought to stay home all day the way I do. Never get out, sew and watch Bridget and——"

Smith is moved to a sudden fit of contrition.

"My dear, the very first afternoon I can get off, we'll go to the vaudeville. Brown was telling me there was a very good one uptown."

Mrs. Smith, reminiscent of well brought-up days, is seen and not heard for at least five minutes, while she is busy thinking what Smith really means.

The lettered sign at the side announces Ka morchy, and one questions if it means a new kind of brea kfast food.

Kamorchy is an other spangled lady—this time with sleight-of-hand attractions to offer. She announces immediately on her arrival that her hands can move quicker than the eye, and also takes the audience into her confidence on certain sentimental matters, punctuating them with winks and smiles.

As usual the American flag plays an important part in the sleight-of-hand work. It appears and reappears in the most unexpected times and places. As soon as you think it is quiescent, lo, it darts from cover and floats triumphantly in the breeze. It is always cheered, running a close race for place with the standard vaudeville jokes.

Outside are the cheerless streets, the patter of down-pouring rain is distinctly heard, and it is inspiring to lean back in the comfortable chair and see the old flag pop out suddenly from under a canary bird's wing when you saw it but a moment before nailed down between an Oriental rug and the platform flooring. It's a good old flag, even if it is at times undignified in its recreations.

Then the sleight-of-hand-and-eye lady rubs a guinea pig into a rabbit, and while you are watching the massage with interest the rabbit disappears. It was there a moment ago and now where is it? It is questions like these that make the vaudeville performance so interesting.

Of course one could spend the afternoon at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, but there is no excitement about that. The Hans Makart or the Rosa Bonheur is always there, unchanging amid unchangeableness; they will be there in five years, in ten. But to look at a live rabbit squirming in a spangled lady's fingers, look it directly in the face and have it suddenly disappear without even dissolving—that strikes at the root of allurement.

It is the mystery that fascinates, holds, grips with resistless force when the stable

ON HER WAY.

and secure enters not into the scheme. That is why the vaudeville is so charming.

There was only one in the audience who was not interested in the rabbit's sudden exit from the scene. This was the literary gentleman from Harlem who sat reading his scientific article undisturbed.

The spangled lady floats down the temporary steps to the floor and, running down the aisle, opens the gentleman's coat and withdraws the writhing rabbit, which she holds up triumphantly.

There is a shriek of laughter. Only the Harlem gentleman, after a certain scared look, and a furtive peep into his other pocket to see that he has not another rabbit or squirrel or guinea pig concealed there, goes on with his article on the origin of species.

The sleight-of-hand lady, emboldened by her success, says coquettishly:

"Will some gentleman in the audience write three words—three words only—on a slip of paper, and I, "holding up a miniature slate on a tripod, "will write exactly the same on this."

The vaudevillains look at each other suspiciously. Of course, she has a confederate. Each one believes his next door neighbor a confederate. Excitement is tense.

It is up to the Jersey commuter to strike a balance by proving that his whole day has not been wasted, the day that was filled in the morning with good resolves of the relation kind. He signifies his assent after a becoming period of doubt, while the uniformed boy, the Mercury of the vaudeville, holds out a slip of paper.

"You are married?" says the spangled lady coquettishly, ignoring his companions and his look of calm, marital content. "Yes? Be very careful what you write."

He is careful, very careful. He writes slowly, with precision. He may never set the river on fire, but on the other hand he will never get his feet wet. That is evident from his cautious air of restraint.

The card is written; in the house you could hear ten pins drop.

THE PARISIAN-LOOKING YOUNG WOMAN WHO JUGGLES WITH THE HEARTS OF A BOXFUL OF BROKERS.

The sleight-of-wink lady keeps her word. She writes hurriedly and, having written, holding the slate close against her throbbing heart, demands that the Mercury boy in the aisle read aloud what has been written.

The Jersey gentleman sinks back with the air of having done his duty. He is a sceptic; no one, he is sure, can read those mystic words. The lady on the platform is a fraud. He is there to expose that fraud. He will sleep content; he pats the flaxen-haired youngster on the head and waits triumphantly.

Mercury has troubles of his own. He is no handwriting expert, getting his $50 a day for deciphering the pot hooks and hangers. But that is not the only thing that troubles him. The vaudevillains wait expectantly.

At length Mercury with trembling voice reads aloud "Ag-Ag-nes."

It may be that there is an Agnes in his life and he objects to this public avowal of accents enshrined under his much-buttoned coat. The next word is "Annex," the next "Diameter."

There is no possible connection of thought between those chosen words. Pride sits enthroned on the Jersey gentleman's brow.

The slate is turned slowly toward the audience. On it are the words "Exactly the same." The sleight-of-mind lady has kept her promise.

There is the Japanese who juggles with everything in sight, and the Parisian-looking demoiselle who juggles with the hearts of some young brokers who have left the Exchange early and taken a box in the direct radius of her charms; there is also the Peterkarageorgevitchscope, or whatever the new kind of scope may be, that shows the thrilling adventures of a fireman's parade, or a day at Coney Island to the vaudevillain.

Then, last of all, comes the genuine vaudeville play. It is the resuscitation of the old barnstorming drama up to date.

There are five acts. There is the man who gets tangled in his matrimonial experiences, there is the young lover and the cruel guardian; the faithful girl and the stern parent; there are two ladies, one of the fainting variety and one grim and relentless. The fainting lady wins; she always does in vaudeville, just as she does in real life, women's clubs to the contrary notwithstanding.

There is always action. It is really the place for the editor of a magazine whose one unceasing cry is for action. Whatever other lack there may be, there is always that.

The actors move on and off with the celerity which suggests catapults or a pursuing landlord. If they forget to respond to their own cues, they respond to some one else's and it does just as well. There is so much action that one loses the plot often in its strenuousness.

Says the veteran, who has been on the boards as long as the vaudeville itself, "I am' 23." He is playing the part of the young lover. No one laughs.

The stage has been empty at least three minutes while the make-up is applied in a dressing room. The young girl dashes on to the vacant stage. She looks about her.

"There is no one here," she announces, with the same air of conviction with which a certain historic gentleman pretended to have discovered silver spoons.

Phyllis is discovered in falsity. She confesses.

"I cannot act," she murmurs.

The vaudevillains applaud violently. Just why deponent saith not.

To the lady who has failed to make a hit in the legitimate and whose voice and manner are as devoid of italics as a printed obituary, says a gallant gentleman, speaking of a recent dénouement, "You take it too hard."

The vaudeville proposal is made with trembling hands and with doubt and hesitation strongly marked. It is received with faints. It is a style of proposal extant in the early '30s; it went out with crinoline and ruffled shirt fronts; it is still, however, alive in the traditions of the vaudeville stage.

Said a well-known theatrical manager lately: "The reason why the good old love making and the revenge act and that sort of thing take so well on the stage at present is because in real life we have no time for it and no place for it. We must have it, and the stage is really a canning factory for obsolete emotions."

Perhaps it is. Certainly the vaudeville performance would make a believer of the most sceptically inclined.

It is the same old summer rain and the same old vaudeville.

"BUSY AT THE OFFICE."

THE GHOST OF A PROSAIC FLAT.

A Demonstration of the Occult Which Three Matter-of-Fact Investigators Would Like Explained.

For the occurrences I am about to describe I offer no explanation; indeed, I have none to offer. I merely set down what occurred, as it occurred, without prejudice or extenuation. From my father, who was a newspaper man before me, I derived the habit of exact observation, which my own newspaper training has developed. With that development has come naturally that scepticism which every newspaper man acquires and which he understands and appreciates before he develops it. It is the scepticism which takes nothing for granted and accepts nothing for truth until personal investigation has determined it to be so. That is the penalty which every active newspaper man pays for his enthusiasms.

I live with Catchings and Hopkins, two other newspaper men employed on the paper for which I work. We have the fifth flat in a large six-story house. The entrance to our apartment from the main hall of the building is at the rear. The door opens into a long, narrow, private hall which runs nearly the whole length of our apartment, ending at the parlor door.

Behind the parlor is a room separated from it by an alcove, intended, perhaps, as a back parlor, which we use for a library and workroom. It has also a door opening into the private hall. Back of that there are two bedrooms, the bathroom and another bedroom, in the order named. Then comes the dining room, a large, square, comfortable room with two windows opening upon an areaway.

In the rear side of the dining room is the door into the kitchen, which is also a large room, with two windows on the area side and one in the rear wall looking out into the back yard. From the side of the kitchen opposite the area a door leads into the servant's room, which is directly behind the main hall, and which we use for a storeroom. I give all these details thus minutely because they are necessary to the clear comprehension of what has been happening here, which culminated last Friday morning.

The main hall of the building is narrow and dark. The stairs are at the rear. They are stairs with narrow treads and high risers, so they are unusually steep. You ascend a flight of eight steps half-way up to the floor above you, and come to a small landing. There the stairs double, and you go up the next flight of seven steps in exactly the opposite direction to that in which you first ascended. It is a complete face-about at each landing.

Until last Friday every flat in the house was occupied. We have lived here for more than a year, but partly from indisposition and partly because our occupation limits our opportunities we had made no acquaintances in the house. Indeed, we knew the name of but one other tenant, a Miss Russell, an actress, who occupied the fourth flat, immediately beneath ours. Although we knew her name, none of us had ever seen her.

My work keeps me at the office until 2 o'clock in the morning. One morning about a month ago as I came into the house I met the janitor going out for Miss Russell's physician. She had fallen ill. Several times after that one or other of us met the physician coming to the house or just going away, and gradually we fell into the habit of asking the janitor about Miss Russell's condition. She was ill of a fever. At first she seemed to respond readily to treatment, but there came a time when the janitor or the physician could not report any change either for better or worse.

"Just about the same, sir," the janitor would say when I asked him. "She doesn't seem to get on."

Because my work usually keeps me out later than the others, I occupy the bedroom between the bathroom and dining room. By that arrangemant I can get my late supper and go to my room without disturbing Hopkins and Catchings if they are asleep when I get in. Lately, however, I have fallen into the habit of going into the parlor to smoke my nightcap pipe.

A negro, Sam, and his wife, Sally, keep house for us. They come from their own home every morning and prepare our breakfast. After we are gone Sally does the work about the flat and gets dinner for us. Dinner is always ready at 6 o'clock. If no one comes for it by 7, Sally clears everything away. Then she arranges our supper and usually about 10 o'clock in the evening goes home. From the time she goes away until the first one of us gets home the flat is entirely unoccupied. Sally always leaves our supper on the table in the dining room. As each man comes in he takes his portion. The last man turns out the light and closes the dining room door.

For about four weeks now an unusual series of events has been keeping all three of us out of the house for two or three hours more than customary at night. Several times it has happened that although I did not get home until 4 o'clock in the morning I was the first one in. I distinctly remember that it was so on Saturday three weeks ago. I had been reading a book which puzzled and interested me in no small degree. After I had eaten my supper I sat in the parlor smoking my pipe, finishing a baffling chapter.

I was aroused from my absorption in the book by the sudden and violent banging of the door between the kitchen and the dining room. For a few seconds I sat still, thinking that perhaps one of the other boys had come in and had slammed the door by accident. But I heard no one move, nor, indeed, was there another sound until, without warning, the slamming of the door was repeated. Then I arose quickly, put down my book, open at the interesting passage, and went swiftly into the dining room, turning up the gas in the hall as I passed.

The dining room was empty. The supper things stood on the table exactly as I had left them, and the kitchen door was shut as usual. I opened it and passed through the kitchen. Nothing seemed amiss, and I lit the gas for a closer inspection. Everything was in its place, and the door into the storeroom was locked according to custom. I unlocked it and looked in. Nothing had been disturbed. I relocked the door and stood in the kitchen. The owner of the house had fitted heavy iron shutters over the windows. It occurred to me that one of these might have worked loose and been swinging on its hinges. I examined them. They were all closely fastened, and the fastenings were sound. I went back into the dining room and locked the kitchen door. I turned the light full on in the dining room and went back to my book. It was closed, and lying on the corner of the piano. I had left it open, on a chair.

It was very curious, whatever this was that was happening, and it distracted my attention from the book for several minutes, but at last the book held me captive again. I do not know how long I sat absorbed in reading, but I became suddenly conscious that the room was cold. Then I felt a soft draft. I put down the book and went to the hall. It was dark. The light was out.

I was certain that I had left it turned well up, and I went to see what was the matter. Before I reached it the kitchen door was shut again with a thundering bang, and I saw that the dining room also was in darkness. I put a match to the gas jet in the hall and went into the dining room. One of the windows I had left shut and fastened had been thrown half way up and the heavy iron shutters were wide open. Just then Catchings and Hopkins came in.

"What's the matter, Seagrave?" Hopkins called out. "You've got the house as cold as a barn."

"If you will tell me what is the matter," I replied, "you will solve a very pretty puzzle."

Then I told them what had occurred. They laughed, a raucous laugh that was not pretty. Nor was it expressive of belief.

"Pipe dreams," said Catchings, reassuringly, to Hopkins. "He's been smoking. Where did you get it, Seagrave?"

I did not answer, but refastened the shutters securely and latched the window shut. After that I went to bed. I had had enough to set me thinking and was in no mood for sport or badinage. I left them sitting at the table and joking about what I had said.

For three nights nothing happened. Each night I was the first at home, some time ahead of the others. Then, on Wednesday, Catchings got home first. It was about half past 3 o'clock when he finished his supper and went into the parlor to smoke. I came at 4 and found him standing, white faced and excited, in the hall, with every room in the house dark.

"I can't keep 'em lighted," he whispered, pointing to a gas jet. "Something turns them out."

"Oho!" said I. "Have you had a pipe dream? Where did you get the dope?"

"As God made me," he answered, "it's the truth."

As he said it the door between the kitchen and the dining room smashed against its jamb with a crash that sent a shiver through the whole house and brought a man from the flat overhead out into the hall, demanding to know what was the matter.

Well, Catchings was satisfied, but Hopkins still laughed, and told long tales of things he had read of sendings and magic in the East.

"We have to do with neither sendings nor magic," replied Catchings. "Life is too short to be wasted in investigating such phenomena. I prefer to let others hold up the hands of science and go myself where such things are not."

"Don't get nervous, old man," said Hopkins. "Stay at least until it has given me a chance."

There was a week of quiet. Every night Hopkins hurried through his work to be the first one home, but it was not until last Thursday a week ago that he got his wish. That night he had what he said was a demonstration of occult physics.

Catchings and I got home together, just before 4 o'clock. Hopkins was in the bathroom. It was a position of vantage, he said, from which he could observe the operations on both sides of him. Something had been playing hookey in the hall with the blue Chinese porcelain umbrella jar. The game had been going on, Hopkins declared, for fully a quarter of an hour when we interrupted it. The jar would be rolled tumultuously down the hall and bring up with a deafening crash against an open door. Then the dining room door into the kitchen would hammer out a thunderous applause, and the jar would go tumbling back again along the hall, to stop with a shivering smash at the open parlor door.

So he told it. When we got in the house was quiet and the umbrella jar stood peacefully erect and whole in its placid niche by the hatrack.

I do not comprehend such things. I do not understand how hatracks, and doors, and umbrella jars, and gas jets, made out of metals which have been inanimate, as we know animation, for years, can suddenly develop the attributes of life and attain voluntary motion. I do not think any of these things occurring once or at infrequent intervals would disturb my stomach or my nerves. But persistency is a powerful lever. I do not like such things as have been happening in our house, and I proposed that we move. Catchings agreed, but Hopkins said wait. He is of an investigating frame of mind, and he was not satisfied. So we waited.

On Tuesday of last week we all got home at the same time and sat down together to our supper. Did you ever notice how differently sudden, unexpected noise affects persons? I never saw so sharp a demonstration of it as on that morning. We had been sitting there for perhaps fifteen minutes when the noise came. It was the tremendous slamming of the door into the kitchen. Hopkins, who specially desired the investigation, fairly leaped out of his chair. Catchings, who most wanted to avoid it, did not show by the movement of a muscle that he had heard the noise. As for me, I sat still, but that was because I had a reason. For I sat facing the kitchen door and at the very moment it was slammed, I happened to be looking directly at it. It had not moved the smallest fraction of an inch, but the noise it made was like the report of a ducking gun on Great South Bay.

When I said that the door had not moved Hopkins declared that I was crosseyed and could not see. We examined it and found it solidly locked. Then Hopkins asserted that it was the door from the kitchen into the storeroom that had slammed. We examined that. It was shut and locked. To determine accurately whether motion accompanied the noise or not we sealed up the windows and the doors from the storeroom to the dining room door into the private hall and retired into the parlor for consultation and the consolation of tobacco. There followed a riot in the rear of our apartment, but we paid no attention to it. After a while the doors got tired and stopped for a rest. Then we went out. We broke every seal as we went along and we shot back every bolt. Not a seal or a bolt had been disturbed.

"The demonstration is satisfactory," said Hopkins, finally. "As far as I am concerned the investigation is closed. Suppose we go househunting to-morrow.

This was, as I said, on Tuesday of last week. We did not find a place that suited us on Wednesday or Thursday, but the house was quiet on both nights. On Friday morning we all got in together soon after 3 o'clock. We were sitting in the parlor discussing the difficulties of moving when there was a soft knock at our door. Catchings answered it. Hopkins and I heard him open the door and then there was a pause. Then we heard Catchings say something, but it was in a voice so low that we could not distinguish his words.

"What is it, Jack?" asked Hopkins.

Catchings made no reply to us, but we heard him say distinctly, "I think you have made a mistake, madam."

Hopkins and I jumped up and went down the hall together. As we passed the gas burner, I turned the light on full. Looking over Catchings's shoulder I saw standing in the doorway a woman perhaps 25 years old. She was in her night robe and her long, glossy, black hair hung thickly over her shoulders. Her hands were clasped in front of her. Her face was absolutely without color, and her eyes, big, round and deep black, were staring straight over our heads up the hall.

"What is it, Jack?" Hopkins asked again, as we reached the door. "What does she want?"

"I don't know," replied Catchings. "She doesn't say." Then addressing the woman he said again: "I think you have made a mistake, madam."

She did not move a muscle. I was staring at her with all my eyes and I could not see her even breathe. Then Hopkins asked, and I remember feeling that his voice was rough and harsh:

"Madam, what is it you want?"

Her expression never changed, and I, who was watching her as intently as it is given to a human being to watch, I swear that her lips did not move, but she answered clearly and distinctly, although in a voice that was like a sigh of the darkness on a country road in the summer when the night has been holding its breath by the hour, and she said:

"Is Miss Russell here?"

"Ah," exclaimed all three of us together, and with intonation of relief, "you have made a mistake. Miss Russell lives on the floor below."

"Oh!" she said, and turned about in the hall as if to go down stairs. Hopkins stepped out to turn up the hall light, but before he reached it that happened which froze him to the spot where he stood. The woman turned slowly. Then she went swiftly down the seven steps of the upper half of the flight, and instead of turning at the midway landing to go on down she went straight through the end wall of the house and out of sight.

"She's fallen!" I cried, and down the stairs we leaped together. For one wild instant we all thought perhaps we had not seen aright, and that she had pitched over the balustrade into the open hallway. To the bottom we raced and back again, and saw nothing more than a frightened mouse scampering to its hole in the corner. There was our door wide open, and the gas jet flaring up, and the end wall sound and whole where the woman went through. We went into the parlor and faced one another without speech, and the silver chime of the clock on the mantel struck four.

As we went out in the morning after breakfast we met the janitor in the hall.

"How is Miss Russell to-day?" asked Catchings.

"She died, sir, at 4 o'clock this morning," answered the man. He took a photograph out of his pocket and showed it to us. "She was a handsome girl, sir," he said.

It was a photograph of the woman who went through the wall.

That was on Friday. Yesterday we found a new place to live. This is Sunday, and we cannot move, but to-morrow—to-morrow—and to-night we are invited out.

He Saved the Cow and the Cow Saved Him.

From the Kansas City Journal.

Belonging to a family in North Topeka was a cow which had been made much of a pet by the children. When the flood came the 8-year-old boy of the family ran to the barn to liberate this cow. The next moment the agonized father and mother saw the boy swept away holding to the rope around the neck of the cow. For four days the family were marooned in the house. All this time they mourned their boy as lost. But he was not lost. He managed to mount the cow and she carried him four miles to the bluffs, swimming and wading.